News Release

U of M Crookston Continues Trend Surpassing Enrollment Records

By asvec on Tuesday, October 8, 2013

Total number of degree-seeking students at 1,813 for fallsemester

Based on official data, enrollment at the Universityof Minnesota Crookston for fall semester 2013 has, again, surpassed previousrecord levels. Official, confirmed datareports place enrollment at 1,813 degree-seeking undergraduates--the highestenrollment in the history of the campus. That number exceeds fall 2012's all-time record of 1,802 and continues aseven-year growth trend.

The official enrollmentnumber includes all full- and part-time degree-seeking undergraduate students--thoseattending courses on campus as well as those pursuing their degrees entirelyonline. Over the past several years, amajor contributing factor to UMC's enrollment growth has been the increase in "onlineonly" students, a designation which means all of their courses are taken online. The U of M Crookston currently offers elevenof its twenty-eight degree programs entirely online as well as on-campus. Thisyear more than 800 students are considered online only students, up from about 700last fall.

This fall thenumber of students attending classes "on site" on the Crookston campus hasdipped to just under 1,000, down roughly 100 students from last year's all-timehigh. Fred Wood, chancellor for the U of M Crookston, views this as a naturalfluctuation involving variables such as UMC's large graduating class of 2013, aslight dip in the number of international students, the improving economy, andoverall declining trends in the number of recent high school graduates in theUpper Midwest. He says, "Our on-campusenrollment is still healthy, if somewhat down, and we have plans to grow thatnumber."

"We arecommitted to offering an excellent on-campus experience for residential andcommuter students," Wood states. "Ourtraditional college students, who are typically 18 to 22 years old, along withmany of our older students want to interact face-to-face with faculty, staff,and other students. That said, we also have an important obligation to serve agrowing segment of students, the vast majority of whom are in their 30s and 40sand choose to pursue their studies online due to career, family, or livingsituation. I see this obligation as an extension of our long-held commitment toaccess that truly supports our mission as a modern, land-grant university. As technology changes, we will likelycontinue to see increased interest in our online programs, and we're verypleased to be able to offer a top quality online education to meet thoseneeds."

BarbaraKeinath, vice chancellor for academic affairs adds, "By offering some of ourprograms online, UMC makes it possible for online students to earn a valuableUniversity of Minnesota degree, continue to work, and manage their familyobligations."

Chancellor Woodsays the campus has plans to grow enrollment strategically, both online andon-campus. A recent planning retreat ofcampus leaders resulted in three major priorities: 1) growing both on-campus and onlineenrollment; 2) retaining and graduating more students, with a strong focus onenhancing student advising and support; and 3) examining the breadth ofacademic majors and program offerings. Accordingto Keinath, new program options will be assessed according to how well theyhelp achieve the UMC mission, address student interest, complement and build onstrengths of the faculty and staff, and meet employment needs. She adds, "Any newprograms, like our current programs, will have to demonstrate that they areworthy of carrying the University of Minnesota name."

"Ouraspirations for growth are a continuation of our evolution," says Wood. "As weevolve, we must strive for quality and excellence in everything we do. We also must keep an eye on costs for our studentsand their families and focus on assessment as, increasingly, the public wants realvalue returned on their educational investments. Finally, placement--in jobs orgraduate and professional school--must also remain a priority."

"TheUniversity of Minnesota Crookston has shown an amazing resilience and the abilityto change," he concludes. "We have evolved to stay current and to find ourplace in the marketplace. Just as this has been so critical in the past, itwill continue to be so in the future. We need to maintain our experimentalspirit with technology as well as our innovative approach to our academicprograms."

The University of Minnesota, Crookston now delivers 28 undergraduate degreeprograms--eleven of which are also available entirely online--and welcomesstudents from more than 20 countries and 40 states. To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

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